

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-11 LAB-06

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1653

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TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PE

SUBJ: MINERS STRIKE CENTROMIN

REF: LIMA 7088

1. ALL OR SOME OF THE FOURTEEN UNIONS AFFILIATED TO SEVERAL NATIONAL FEDERATIONS AND REPRESENTING WORKERS AT CENTROMIN-PERU MINING COMPLEX, CALLED A 48-HOUR STRIKE ON AUG 26-27. MILITANT LEADER JUAN CORNEJO GOMEZ TERMED STRIKE NON-POLITICAL AND IN DEFENSE OF CONTRACT DEMANDS. ACCORDING TO CORNEJO THE FORMER "IMPERIALIST ENTERPRISE" (CERRO DE PASCO) HAD NEGOTIATED MORE SERIOUSLY AND OFFERED MINERS BETTER SETTLEMENT THAN THAT OFFERED NOW BY GOP. CORNEJO CLAIMED STRIKE WAS ALMOST TOTALLY EFFECTIVE WITH OVER 13,000 MINERS WALKING OUT.

2. CENTROMIN OFFICIALS TERMED THE STRIKE PARTIAL (OFFICE WORKERS AFFILIATED TO APRISTA CTP HAVE NOT WALKED OUT AND SOME NON-MINE OPERATIONS CONTINUE TO FUNCTION) BUT ADMITTED THAT MAJOR MINES PARALYZED. OFFICIALS CLAIMED STRIKE WAS COSTING OVER ONE MILLION DOLLARS PER DAY. CENTROMIN, GOP, EXPROPRIATED PRESS, AND UNIONS ALL AGREE THUS FAR THAT STRIKE PROCEEDING PEACEFULLY. CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WILL RESUME AUG 28 WITH LABOR MINISTRY
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PARTICIPATION.

3. COMMENT: 48-HOUR STRIKE EVENTUALLY COULD BE PRELUDE TO MORE
DRAMATIC CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN MINER UNIONS AND GOP. THE TWO
PARTIES REMAIN POLES APART AND LABOR MINISTRY INVOLVEMENT IS HARDLY
THAT OF DISINTERESTED MEDIATOR. LABOR MINISTER SALA-OROZCO
CALLED UNION LEADERS "PROFESSIONAL AGITATORS PUSHING FOR
DEMONSTRATION OF FORCE" AND DESIROUS OF ANARCHY. SALA-OROZCO
POINTED OUT THAT BEFORE EXPROPRIATION OF MINES STRIKES ONLY
AFFECTED CERRO DE PASCO CORPORATION SINCE PROFITS LEFT THE
COUNTRY. NOW, HOWEVER, CENTROMIN PROFITS ARE EARMARKED FOR
DEVELOPMENT OF PERU; ECONOMICALLY-DAMAGING STRIKES ADVERSELY
AFFECT THAT DEVELOPMENT, CONSEQUENTLY HARMING ALL PERUVIANS.
"THIS WE WILL NOT TOLERATE", GENERAL SALA-OROZCO DECLARED. IN
THAT SAME SPIRIT LABOR MINISTRY HAS DECLARED 48 HOUR STRIKE
ILLEGAL AND, ALTHOUGH MINISTRY WILL ACT AS MEDIATOR IN CONTRACT
NEGOTIATIONS, MINISTER SALA-OROZCO REJECTS A DIALOGUE OF
"THAT FEDERATION (CORNEJO-LED GROUP) WITH THE LABOR MINISTER."

4. FOR HIS PART, UNION LEADER CORNEJO TOLD PRESS HE WILL SEEK
MEETING WITH PRESIDENT VELASCO IF LABOR MINISTRY UNABLE SETTLE
DISPUTE. SUCCESSFUL PRESIDENTIAL INTERVENTION WILL HOWEVER,
REQUIRE FAR GREATER SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING AND COMPROMISE
THAN THE PARTIES NOW DISPLAY. THUS FAR GOP IS TAKING PUBLIC STANCE
THAT UNABLE FATHOM HOW WORKERS AND UNIONS, WHICH HAD EXPRESSED
WILLINGNESS TO DIE FOR THE REVOLUTION IN THE STRUGGLE TO EXPRO-
PRIATE IMPERIALIST INTERESTS, COULD NOW STRIKE AGAINST THAT
REVOLUTION FOR THOSE BETTER WAGES AND CONDITIONS SOUGHT
FROM FORMER COMPANY. IT IS ALSO IRONIC THAT NEWLY EXPROPRIATED
PRESS NOW DECRIES UNION DEMANDS AS "INTRANSIGENCE", WHEN ONLY LAST
YEAR GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED NEWSPAPERS HAD FULLY SUPPORTED SIMILAR
UNION DEMANDS AGAINST THEN U.S.-OWNED CERRO DE PASCO.
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